

Notes on Malay History.

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I. Introductory.

About a dozen years ago a comparison of the details of Malay history as given in the *Sĕjarah Mĕlayu* ' (or "Malay Annals") with the information contained in the Notes on the Malay Archipelago and Malacca (extracted and translated from various old Chinese sources by Mr. W. P. Groeneveldt) and with the section in the Commentaries of Albuquerque relating to the history of Malacca led me to the conclusion that the usual chronology, which dated the fall of Singapore and the foundation of Malacca in the year 1252 A.D. or thereabouts, was hopelessly untenable. The evidence available seemed to make it pretty clear that these events must be put somewhat more than a century later, probably somewhere about the year 1377 A.D., in fact. A short paper embodying this conclusion and some of the arguments leading to it was read by me before the XIth Oriental Congress at Paris in 1897, and subsequently appeared in the printed transactions of that congress.

The arguments, in outline, were these. First, the received chronology gave absurdly long reigns to the Malacca Rajas: for instance four generations of them, from Sultan Muhammad Shah to Sultan Alauddin Shah inclusive, are made to cover a space of 201 years; which is extremely improbable and next door to impossible. Similarly the life of the great Bĕndahara Paduka Raja, a leading minister of state in Malacca in the 15th. century and one of the most striking figures in the *Sĕjarah Mĕlayu*, would (if we accept the ordinary chronology) cover about 130 years, during more than 100 of which he must have held the office of Bĕndahara! This is manifestly absurd. Secondly, the Chinese records, which in some cases are contemporary with the events they relate, give a list of the names